

Motor vehicles: type-approval of hydrogen-powered vehicles

2007/0214(COD) - 03/09/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 644 votes to 2 with 11 abstentions, a legislative resolution amending the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on type-approval of hydrogen powered motor vehicles and amending Directive 2007/46/EC. The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Anja **WEISGERBER** (EPP-ED/DE) on behalf of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection. The amendments were the result of a compromise between Parliament and Council.

The main amendments were as follows :

- **"hydrogen powered vehicle"** means any motor vehicle that uses hydrogen as fuel to propel the vehicle. The Commission had defined it as any motor vehicle that uses pure hydrogen or a mixture of hydrogen and natural gas as fuel to propel the vehicle;
- the Commission must adopt certain implementing measures. These include the detailed rules for labelling or other means of clear and rapid identification of the vehicle as set out in Annex VI point 16, which states that labels or other means of identification shall be used to **indicate to rescue services that the vehicle is powered by hydrogen** and that liquid or compressed (gaseous) hydrogen is used. These measures must be adopted in accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny;
- the Commission may adopt certain other implementing measures, including specification for the requirements relating to, inter alia, the use of pure hydrogen or a mixture of hydrogen and natural gas/biomethane; and impact protection of the vehicle with regard to the integrity of hydrogen components and systems. Those measures must also be adopted in accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny;
- Parliament made some amendments to the annexes, particularly Annex I (list of components subject to type-approval) and Annex VI (requirements for the installation to hydrogen components and systems) Hydrogen leakage detection sensors are subject to type-approval.

Members inserted some **new recitals** into the text:

- the CARS 21 High Level Group final report stated that efforts with a view to increasing international harmonisation of motor vehicle regulations should be maintained where appropriate, with a view to involve the key vehicle markets and to extend harmonisation to areas not yet covered, notably both in the framework of the 1958 and the 1998 Agreements of the UNECE. In line with this recommendation, the Commission should continue to support the development of internationally harmonised requirements for motor vehicles under the auspices of UNECE. In particular, if a Global Technical Regulation (GTR) on hydrogen and fuel cell vehicles is adopted, the Commission should consider the possibility of adapting the requirements of this Regulation to those of that GTR;
- hydrogen mixtures could be used as a transition fuel towards the use of pure hydrogen, to facilitate the introduction of hydrogen powered vehicles in countries where there is a good natural gas infrastructure. The Commission should therefore develop requirements for the use of mixtures of hydrogen and natural gas/biomethane, especially a mixing ratio of hydrogen and gas which takes account of technical feasibility and environmental benefits;
- owing to the characteristics of the fuel, hydrogen powered vehicles may require a specific treatment from rescue services. It is, therefore, necessary to lay down requirements for the clear and rapid

identification of such vehicles to inform those services of the fuel stored on board the vehicle. Whilst the identification should be fit for purpose it should, as far as possible, avoid being of a nature that is likely to concern the public;

- hydrogen powered vehicles are unlikely to be successful on the market unless adequate filling station infrastructure is available in Europe. The Commission should therefore look into suitable measures to support **the establishment of a Europe-wide filling-station network** for hydrogen powered vehicles;
- innovative small vehicles, designated under EC type-approval legislation as L category vehicles, are considered as early adopters of hydrogen as a fuel. This is because introducing hydrogen for these vehicles requires less effort, as the technical challenge and level of investment required is not as high as with cars. The Commission should, no later than 1 January 2010, evaluate the possibility of regulating the type-approval of hydrogen L category vehicles.